



# A HEALTHY START TO SCHOOL

  
**York Region**

## STARTING SCHOOL IS A VERY EXCITING STEP

With encouragement and understanding, the transition to this new stage in life will be a fulfilling adventure. This brochure is full of ideas on how to make school healthy and rewarding.

## HEALTHY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Your child's growth and development is important to their success in school. Track your child's growth and development by completing the **looksee checklist**. Visit **[york.ca/earlyyears](http://york.ca/earlyyears)** for more information on child development.

## FOR THE BEST HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, EAT HEALTHY, STAY ACTIVE, SLEEP WELL AND MAKE YOUR SPACE SMOKE-FREE



### **Pack nutritious lunches and snacks**

Healthy eating habits promote wellbeing, and growth and development. Packing healthy lunches and snacks can fuel energy levels and support learning. Use **Canada's Food Guide** to help choose vegetables and fruit, whole grains, and protein foods for lunch and snacks.

**Involve children in making their lunches.** Pack food into easy-to-open containers that your child can open themselves. Be food safe and use a thermos to keep hot foods hot and ice packs to keep cold foods cold. Pack a reusable water bottle to stay hydrated with tap water.

For more ideas, see **School Lunch Your Kids Will Munch**.



### **Get 60 minutes of physical activity per day, every day for physical and mental well-being!**

Preschool children, ages **3-4** should spend at least 180 minutes in a variety of physical activities throughout the day, of which at least 60 minutes is active play. Children and youth, ages **5-17** need at least 60 minutes a day of heart pumping activity.

For more information, visit: **24-Hour Movement Guidelines**.

Help your child reduce the time they spend being sedentary each day by **limiting screen time**. For preschool children ages **3-4 years**, no more than one hour per day. For children and youth ages **5-17 years**, no more than two hours per day.

Learning physical literacy or basic movement skills such as running, jumping, balancing, catching, throwing, kicking, or swimming helps children successfully join in a variety of sports and physical activities for life.

For more information, visit **Physical Activity for Schools | York Region**



### **Sleep tight!**

Make sure your child gets the recommended amount of uninterrupted sleep per night to replenish their body's energy. Keep regular bedtimes and wake-up times.

For preschoolers ages **3-4 years**, 10 to 13 hours of good-quality sleep, which may include a nap, is recommended.

For children, ages **5-13 years**, 9 to 11 hours of sleep per night is recommended.

For youth ages **14-17 years**, 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night is recommended.

For more information visit **24-Hour Movement Guidelines**.

### **Make your home smoke and vapour-free**



A smoke and vapour-free home is essential to help keep your child healthy. Your child's lungs are still developing, making them more vulnerable to the effects of smoke and vapour exposure. Smoking in the home increases your child's risk of getting colds, ear infections, bronchitis, asthma and pneumonia.

Vaping in the home may cause similar health risks due to chemicals such as tin, lead and nickel found in e-cigarette vapour; however, the long-term side effects of exposure to second-hand vapour are currently unknown.

### **Start the conversation about substance use early**

It is important to keep all substances (alcohol, cannabis edibles, pain medications, over the counter medications etc.) out of children's reach and in a safe place.

It is never too early to start the conversation about the safety of medication use, and other substances. Be a positive role model and remember you are the most important influence in your child's life.





## CHOOSE A SAFE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY WAY TO GET TO SCHOOL!

Walking, biking, or taking the bus are healthy ways of getting to and from school! Active school travel increases physical activity and helps lessen traffic congestion improving safety conditions. If you need to drive your child to school, park your vehicle away from the school and walk the last block.

## KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE

### Safety tips for protecting children:

- Teach children about pedestrian and road safety. Let children know the role that crossing guards and bus drivers have in keeping them safe.
- Always cross the road with children nine years of age or less — young children do not have the ability to be aware of traffic. This skill is usually developed between the ages of nine and eleven so even older children may need to practice crossing the road safely.
- Ensure children are wearing the correct and properly-fitted helmet every time they bike, skateboard, scooter or in-line skate.
- It is safest to keep a child in a forward-facing car seat with harness straps for as long as they are within the weight and height limits of their convertible, 3-in-1 or combination car seat (usually up to 29kg/65lbs). After that, use a booster seat until they are at least 145cm/4'9" tall.
- Actively supervise children at home, school and in-and-around playgrounds to prevent harmful childhood falls. Teach and reinforce playground safety rules and help children learn to manage risk.
- Children and youth have the highest rate of emergency department visits for concussion. Be aware of your school board concussion policy which supports children in their safe return to school and sport.



## SCREENS AWAY, GO OUTSIDE AND PLAY!

Allow time for unstructured outdoor active play every day.

**Keep your child comfortable and protected by making sure outdoor clothing matches the weather.**



In winter, children need an insulated jacket with a hood, snow pants, hats, gloves and insulated winter boots.



On sunny days or when the UV index is three or more, children should wear a wide brimmed hat, cover up, play in the shade, put on sunscreen and wear sunglasses.

## ENCOURAGE HEALTHY SMILES

Tooth brushing is an important part of your child's daily routine. Use a child-sized toothbrush with soft, rounded bristles. Replace it every three to four months or sooner if worn, frayed or after your child has been sick.

Children up to six years of age are not able to brush their teeth properly— you will have to do it for them. Let your child have a turn brushing when you are done.

**Set a good example by letting your child see that you take care of your teeth daily and teach them to:**

- Brush at least twice a day for two minutes, especially before bedtime
- Floss daily, rinse mouth with water after eating/drinking and wait 30 minutes to brush teeth after meals and snacks
- Use a green pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste for children aged three and older if they are able to spit, unless otherwise advised by their oral health professional
- Avoid sugary snacks between meals. Encourage your child to drink water rather than pop.

Take your child to see the dentist regularly to maintain a healthy mouth, beginning with the first dental visit by first birthday.



# IMMUNIZATION AGAINST CHILDHOOD DISEASES IN ONTARIO

Immunizations are safe and the best defense against serious childhood diseases. Ontario law requires students attending school to be up-to-date with diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, polio, mumps, measles, rubella, meningococcal disease and varicella (chickenpox - for children born in 2010 or later) immunizations.

All vaccines on the Routine Immunization Schedule in Ontario are free and are available at your doctor's office. Students whose immunizations are not up to date may be suspended from school unless a vaccine exemption is on file with York Region Public Health.

## Student immunization records

When registering for school (junior or senior kindergarten), York Region Public Health will contact you requesting your child's immunization record (i.e., immunization yellow card). It is the parent's responsibility to keep a record of a child's immunization and inform York Region Public Health of these immunizations. The name of the vaccine and the date it was given should be included in the yellow Immunization Record.



York Region Public Health does not automatically get notified when your child receives a vaccine at your doctor's office so keep your child's records up to date and report any vaccines they have received. You can do this online at [York.ca/Immunizations](https://york.ca/immunizations) or Call York Region Public Health at 1-877-464-9675, ext. 73456 to provide an update.

## COVID-19 vaccine

Everyone 6 months of age and older are now able to get a primary series (which is usually two doses) of COVID-19 vaccine. Booster doses (which are very important to have to extend the strength and length of the protection you get from a primary series) are available for everyone over the age of five.

To learn more about COVID-19 vaccines and how to book an appointment visit [york.ca/COVID19Vaccine](https://york.ca/COVID19Vaccine) or call Access York at 1-877-464-9675.





## ENCOURAGE GOOD HANDWASHING

Germes can cause illnesses, like colds, influenza (coughing, sore throat, muscle aches and fever) and norovirus (vomiting and diarrhea). They spread when we shake hands, share objects, and touch door handles and tables. Washing hands correctly is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs.

### Follow these guidelines with your child:

1. Wet hands with warm running water
2. Apply soap
3. Rub hands together for 15 seconds (don't forget between fingers, thumbs, fingertips and back of hands)
4. Rinse hands with warm running water
5. Dry hands
6. Use a paper towel to turn off the tap and open the door



### Remind your child to wash their hands:

- Before eating or drinking and before and after handling food
- After using the washroom, blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing into their hands, touching garbage or animals and playing outdoors
- Before and after visiting someone who is sick
- When hands look or feel dirty

By washing your hands correctly and at the right times – you are a good role model for your child! Visit [York.ca/InfectionPrevention](http://York.ca/InfectionPrevention) for more information on how to prevent infectious diseases.

# HAVE YOUR CHILD'S EYES CHECKED ONCE A YEAR UNTIL THEY TURN 19 YEARS OF AGE

## Detect and correct problems

early and prevent issues  
which can result in  
permanent vision loss.

## Eye exams are free

with an OHIP card for  
children 19 years  
of age and under.



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For more information please visit  
[york.ca/HealthyEyes](http://york.ca/HealthyEyes)  
or [findaneyedoctor.ca](http://findaneyedoctor.ca) #HealthyEyes



## Support your child's learning by volunteering on the Healthy School Committee in your child's school.



### PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675  
TTY: 1-866-512-6228  
[accessyork@york.ca](mailto:accessyork@york.ca)

[york.ca](http://york.ca)

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